Annual Report

Northern Alberta Development Council

1990-91

92-02426/

Alberta
TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Office of the Minister

208 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2080

To His Honour
Gordon Towers
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Alberta

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith, the twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Al. "Boomer" Adair
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Alberta
NORTHERN ALBERTA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

2nd Floor, Provincial Building, 9621 - 96 Avenue, Postal Bag 900-14, Peace River, Alberta, Canada T8S 1T4 403/624-6274 Fax 403/624-6184

Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair
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Northern Alberta Development Council

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Respectfully submitted,

Bob Elliott, MLA
Grande Prairie
Chairman

Table of Contents

PAGE

Statement 7

Northern Alberta Development Council 9

- Members 9
- Area of Jurisdiction 11
- General Objectives 13
- New Council Appointments 14

Northern Alberta Development Council Activities 15

- Public Meetings 15
- Briefs 15
- Research and Coordination 15
- Mental Health in Northern Alberta: Addressing the Issues 16
- Fundraising Handbook 17
- Northern Perspectives Pre-Conference Report 18
- Northern Perspectives Conference 19
- Northern Perspectives Video 21
- Northern Perspectives Student Poster Contest 21
- Student Bursary Program 22
- Medical Elective Project 22

Northern Development Branch 23

Statement of the Chairman

Bob Elliott, MLA
Chairman
Northern Alberta Development Council

During the 1990-91 fiscal year, the Northern Alberta Development Council carried the results of the previous year's study on emerging trends to a wider platform. A major conference called "Northern Perspectives" provided northern Albertans with the opportunity to examine and discuss the many challenges arising from the changing north.

Council clearly tapped the pulse of northerners in presenting this opportunity. More than 300 delegates met in Grande Prairie to share their views and offer ideas and suggestions. Following the conference, Council began work on a position paper incorporating the results of these discussions.

Another important project undertaken by Council in 1990-91 was a detailed examination of the status of mental health delivery services in the north. This resulted in a definitive report on such service delivery as it relates to northern communities. It is the first such study done for any northern Canadian area.

Council continued its involvement in other northern initiatives; for example, it continued support for the Peace Arch Project and its efforts toward the development of sound water management in northern Alberta. Council members participated, as in the past, on committees of various kinds. Council also continued its endeavors in the field of bursaries, recruitment of professionals and follow-up of briefs received at public meetings.

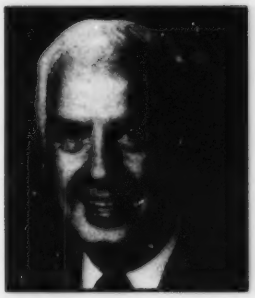
As it has done for more than a quarter of a century, Council worked successfully within its mandate on behalf of all citizens of northern Alberta. The very busy year ended with the appointment of three new members to fill those vacancies created by retiring councillors.

Northern Alberta Development Council

1990 - 91

BOB ELLIOTT, MLA
CHAIRMAN
BEAVERLODGE

Elaine Gauthier
Deputy-Chairman
Plamondon



HON. AL "BOOMER" ADAIR
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT
PEACE RIVER

Gilbert Balderston
Sexsmith

Pearl Calahasen, MLA
Grouard

Earl Dionne
Fort McMurray

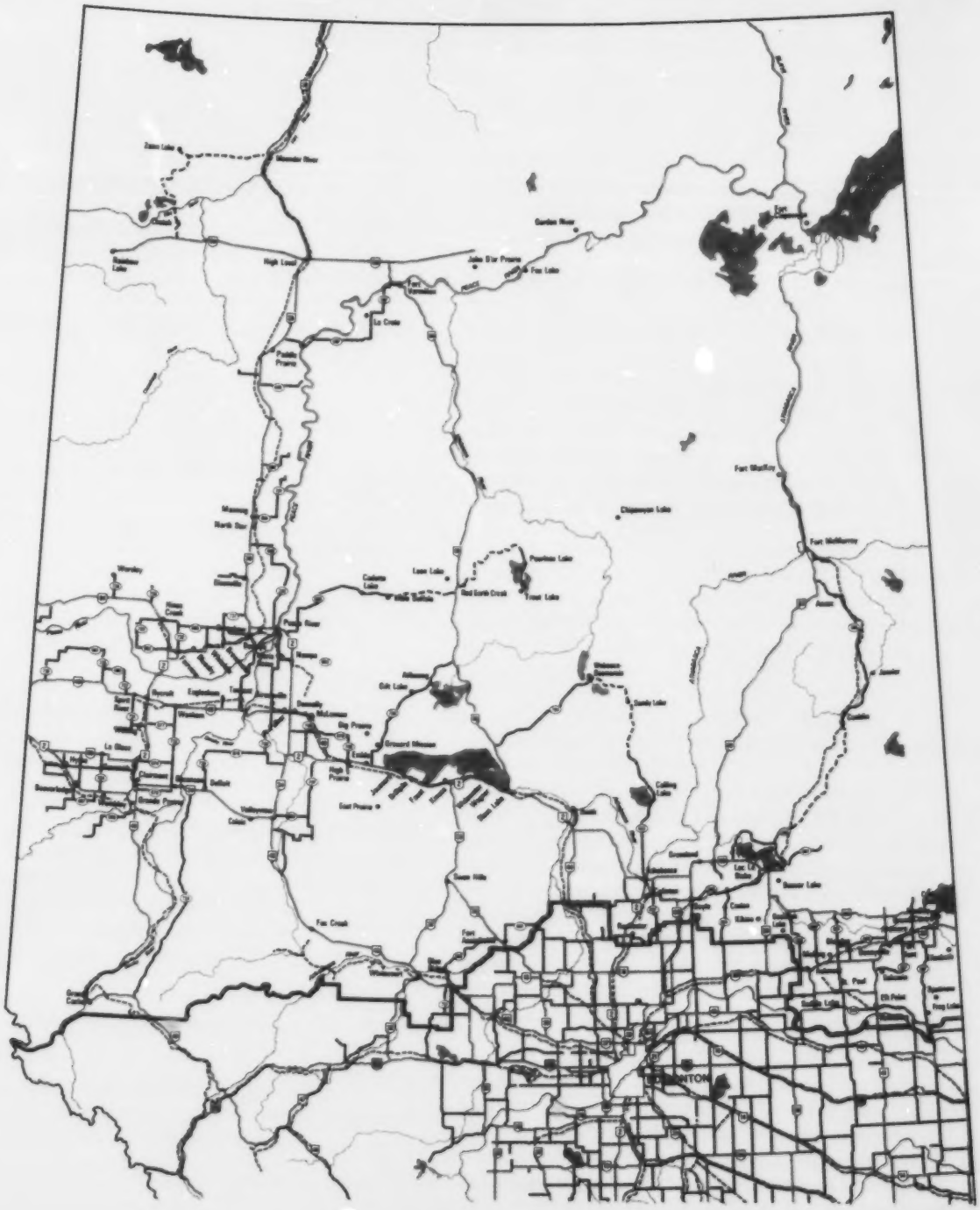
Kim Ghostkeeper
Paddle Prairie

Harold Junck
Swan Hills

Larry Langager
St. Paul

Jim Reynolds
Fairview

Daria Wallsten
Slave Lake



NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA

COMMUNITIES WITH POPULATION OVER 70 (1991 CANADA CENSUS)

PRIMARY HIGHWAY — SECONDARY ROAD - - - - - L.O.C. ROAD ——— RAILWAY

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Northern Alberta Development Council was initially created in 1963 as a five-member advisory body to the provincial government. It was enlarged in 1973 to a membership of 10 and currently consists of eight private citizens appointed on the basis of public nominations and two elected members of the Legislative Assembly.

Through its own Act, the Northern Alberta Development Council is charged with the responsibility to "investigate, monitor, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the government thereon." The Act makes specific reference to social and economic development, the development of communities and service delivery, and the development of government services and programs.

The Council, at present, has a full-time MLA Chairman and reports to the Executive Council through the minister responsible for northern development.

The Council's primary role is to provide government with a northern point-of-view on a wide range of issues, supplementing and complementing the perspectives of northern MLAs. A major objective of Council since 1973 has been to increase public participation in the planning and design of delivery systems for various government services in northern Alberta.

The general purposes that Council wishes to promote are:

- to enhance economic and educational opportunities within northern Alberta in order to encourage young people to stay;
- to enhance the viability of traditional northern small town and rural life;
- to support the desires and aspirations of all residents in northern Alberta for a fair share in the wealth and potential of the area;
- to support the desires of various cultural and ethnic groups within northern Alberta for maintenance of their distinctive heritage.

Through regularly scheduled public meetings and sponsorship of major conferences and seminars, the Council serves as a forum to which residents can express their ideas and concerns regarding development of the north. In addition to receiving briefs at public meetings, the Council can initiate research into particular opportunities or needs, and often pursues, on behalf of northern residents, efforts toward the development of new programs or coordination of the existing service delivery.

The information service provided through the response to briefs received from the public results in the initiation of most Council activities. Nearly 60 percent of the briefs presented to the Northern Alberta Development Council since 1973 have resulted in positive responses.

Issues considered by the Northern Alberta Development Council during the year under review were many, including mental health, water management, transportation and infrastructure development, education, training, medical and professional recruitment, agriculture, tourism, northern taxation, resource and small business development, municipal and local government concerns, wildlife management, recreation, rural revitalization, health care, telecommunications, senior citizen care, community services, native employment, family violence, housing, policing, environmental concerns, child care, alcohol and drug abuse treatment.

The Northern Alberta Development Council sponsored a major conference in November, 1990, called "Northern Perspectives". The conference involved over 300 delegates from across northern Alberta and featured three days of workshops and informative speakers. "Northern Perspectives" dealt with changes and challenges facing the north into the 1990s. Topics covered included economic development, the environment and community prosperity.

An important NADC publication in 1990/91 was a study titled "Mental Health Services in Northern Alberta: Addressing the Issues". The research identifies a strategy to improve the quality and quantity of mental health services in northern Alberta. The report consolidates a broad range of views from northern communities and service providers. Based on the research report, the NADC published a position paper with eight recommendations for the improvement of mental health service delivery in the north.

The Northern Alberta Development Council serves as a facilitator and catalyst, assisting the line departments of government responsible for the implementation of changes and service improvements. The Council's public participation role over the years has provided an enhanced two-way flow of information, resulting in marked improvements for all northern Albertans.

NEW COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

In late 1990, through public advertisements in all northern newspapers, nominations were solicited from northern community groups and organizations for nominees to replace retiring public members of the Council.

In 1991, the provincial cabinet, through the minister responsible for northern development, the Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair, appointed three new members to the Northern Alberta Development Council. The membership of 1991/92 includes:

Bob Elliott, MLA, Grande Prairie, Chairman
Gilbert Balderston, Sexsmith, Deputy-Chairman
Saran Ahluwalia, Cold Lake
Pearl Calahasen, MLA, Lesser Slave Lake
Earl Dionne, Fort McMurray
Harold Junck, Swan Hills
Larry Langager, St. Paul
Jack Newman, Fort Vermilion
Marlin Sexauer, Whitecourt
Daria Wallsten, Slave Lake

Northern Alberta Development Council Activities

PUBLIC MEETINGS

1990-91 Public Meetings of the Northern Alberta Development Council	
Spirit River	April
Fox Creek	May
Buffalo Lake	August
High Prairie	October
Grande Prairie	November
St. Paul	February

During 1990/91, the Northern Alberta Development Council held five public meetings. Three other administrative meetings took place in Peace River. A major conference in Grande Prairie discussing the environment and economy was hosted in November.

One hundred and forty-five briefs were received from groups and individuals in attendance at the public meetings. Each brief submitted was reviewed by the Council to determine a course of action and forwarded to various departments and agencies of government for consideration and comment. The departmental responses were then discussed by the Council, and a decision made as to whether or not the department's position and proposed action were appropriate. If the departmental response was felt to be inappropriate, the Council directed the Northern Development Branch to further clarify the issue through Branch-directed research, or to undertake discussions with the responsible officials in order to achieve the necessary action. At times, coordination of the efforts of a number of departments of government was required. Brief originators were advised of the progress made on each of the ideas or concerns expressed in their submissions.

The results achieved by the Council varied greatly from brief to brief. In some instances the concerns raised were either completely or partially resolved. In some cases, the Council and Branch are continuing to work toward a practical solution which is acceptable to all involved. The current status of any of the briefs submitted to Council is available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

BRIEFS

During the year, 14 briefs were received from Berwyn, Eureka River, Fairview, Grimshaw, High Level, La Crete, Manning, Peace River, and Worsley in the northwest region; 25 from Driftpile, Faust, High Prairie, Joussard, Kinuso, Red Earth Creek, Swan Hills, and Whitecourt; 48 from Athabasca, Bonnyville, Boyle, Caslan, Cold Lake, Elk Point, Glendon, Grand Centre, Lac La Biche, La Corey, McRae, and St. Paul; and 58 from Crooked Creek, Falher, Fox Creek, Grande Prairie, Hythe, La Glace, McLennan, Rycroft, Sexsmith, Slave Lake, Spirit River, and Valleyview.

RESEARCH AND COORDINATION

Many of the issues brought to the attention of the Northern Alberta Development Council require intensive background work and follow-up. As a result, the council initiated a number of research projects and efforts directed at coordination or modification of government service delivery in various areas.

Major Council activities in 1990/91 included:

- ongoing review and discussion with the minister responsible for northern development about several issues related to northern development
- a study and publication of the NADC position paper on mental health services in northern Alberta
- a meeting with the minister of Forestry, Lands & Wildlife regarding forestry issues and forest projects in northern Alberta
- research into the impacts of the Goods and Services Tax, and the Northern Tax Benefit on northern communities and residents
- a meeting with an official of the College of Physicians & Surgeons to review physician recruitment issues in northern Alberta
- continued support for and participation in the Health Care Connection for the recruitment of health care personnel to northern Alberta

- completion of a handbook on community funding entitled "Fundraising Handbook"
- advice and support to the development of the Alberta Health-sponsored Rural Physician Action Plan
- sponsorship of a major conference on the economy and environment in northern Alberta, called "Northern Perspectives: Northern Alberta into the '90s"
- participation on a steering committee to assess the costs of a permanent road between Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan
- assistance to a number of organizations with initial review of the need for an industrial park in the County of Athabasca
- continued participation in and coordination of activities related to the "Peach Arch Project" which seeks to generate employment and business benefits from the oil and gas industry in remote communities
- assistance to a group of farmers in assessing the impact of changes in the Crow Benefit payments
- initiation of a native business "mentoring" project
- participation on the Forest Industry Training Interdepartmental Committee
- continued chairmanship of Northern Supplementary Fund for Water and Sewer
- participation on the Minister's Advisory Committee on the Beekeeping Industry
- continued involvement on the Fort McKay Interface Committee
- continued support for improved services to address family violence concerns in the north
- participation on the Local Development Initiatives Interdepartmental Committee
- ongoing coordination regarding sub-basin water management funding for northern Alberta
- continued sponsorship of the Student Bursary Program
- support for a manpower recruitment component to enhance the Student Bursary Program
- continued production of the *Alberta North* magazine for children.

MENTAL HEALTH IN NORTHERN ALBERTA: ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

In the last number of years, the NADC has frequently received briefs on the topic of mental health. As a result of these briefs, Council requested that a study be undertaken to review the current state of mental health services in the north. In 1989, a steering committee was established to direct the study.

The research report was commissioned to identify strategies to improve the quality and quantity of mental health services in northern Alberta. The primary objectives were:

- to review existing mental health services and outline service gaps
- to examine service impediments in northern Alberta including: recruitment difficulties, staff retention, sparse population, distance, and special needs groups; and to explore ways to mitigate these
- to examine existing and proposed coordination, and innovative projects
- to propose implementation strategies and recommendations to address the research findings.

The broad scope of this project included mental health-related services provided by Alberta Health (Mental Health Division), AADAC, FCSS agencies, Alberta Family & Social Services (Child Welfare), health units, hospitals, various volunteer agencies and others.

Three major conclusions arose from input by the public and service providers during the research:

1. Current service delivery systems do not meet the mental health needs of many northern residents. Services for youth and services in small centres were particularly problematic.
2. Service deficiencies are more pronounced as community size decreases and remoteness increases.

3. Service delivery issues vary considerably from community to community.

The study on mental health services in northern Alberta yielded these principal findings:

- Prevention and promotion activities are often not available in communities because volunteers and paraprofessionals of various agencies must turn their attention to crisis intervention.
- Northerners are concerned about the shortfall in professional psychological and psychiatric treatment services.
- Many communities have no local follow-up for clients returning from or treated by professionals in another centre.
- Access to various mental health services depends upon community size. Access is highest in the two northern cities, followed by communities with mental health clinics. Access declines in other towns and small communities.
- Service providers perceive a high constant demand for mental health services.

Based on the findings of the research report, the two public workshops and extensive consultation, the Northern Alberta Development Council made the following recommendations in a Council position paper:

1. Mental health services should receive higher priority and, therefore, financial and staffing resources of applicable government departments should be reallocated.
2. Resources for mental health services should be increased, particularly where small communities are distant from service delivery centres.
3. Promotion, prevention, education and service awareness should be increased significantly.
4. To the greatest extent possible, northern service providers and citizens should be involved in needs identification; development of programs, services and strategies; and allocation of resources.
5. Training and training opportunities for community-based volunteers and professionals should be improved.
6. Alberta Health (Mental Health Division) and the Public Service Commission should develop a proactive and specialized recruitment and retention strategy for hard-to-recruit/retain positions within the northern regions.
7. Coordination among local and external service providers and local agencies should be improved.
8. The interdepartmental committee examining overlaps and gaps within departments' mandates should report its findings to the ministers by June 30, 1991.

FUNDRAISING HANDBOOK

Another in the NADC series of community self-help handbooks, "Fundraising for a Community Project", recognizes the importance of fundraising as a key source of revenue for many organizations. The fundraising handbook is designed as a guide to the essential steps in raising money. The process explained by the handbook will greatly improve likelihood of fundraising success.

The general objectives of this handbook are:

- to increase the opportunities for non-profit, community-based groups to successfully raise funds
- to demonstrate that by following a specific path or plan in the quest to raise money, greater fundraising success will likely be realized.

The process outlined in the handbook includes the following five steps:

Building the Foundation for Local Fundraising
Developing a Fundraising Campaign Strategy
Launching the Campaign
Managing the Process
Closing Successfully

Building the Foundation

- Identify and develop the idea.
- Gain public support.
- Establish the organization (leadership, committees, office).
- Formalize the group (forming a society, obtaining a charitable donations number).

Developing a Fundraising Campaign Strategy

- Set a campaign strategy.
- Identify and research funding sources.
- Assign tasks and timelines.

Launching the Campaign

- Approach donors.
- Organize special events and activities.
- Work with the media.

Managing the Process

- Keep the project on track.
- Recognize volunteers and donors.
- Keep community perception positive.

Closing Successfully

- Tie up the loose ends.
- Recognize donors and volunteers.

The handbook builds on identifying the paths for fundraising success and provides hints, suggestions, recommendations and ideas. Like the previous handbooks, this one is easy to read, non-technical and offers "real-life" illustrations of community fundraising efforts.

NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT

In preparation for the Northern Perspectives Conference in November of 1990, the NADC prepared a report that highlighted the challenges and opportunities facing the region into the 1990s. Two principal sources of information were used to prepare the report:

- a review of issues raised in public briefs received by the NADC during the 1980s
- a survey of community leaders conducted during the summer of 1990.

The study revealed that although many development concerns identified during the 1980s are still with us, other issues have emerged that require attention.

Community leaders who participated in the survey believe that northern development should proceed in a manner that:

- preserves the life-styles of northern communities
- maintains traditional economic sectors while supporting new industries
- provides for an adequate level of human services
- ensures the long-term integrity of the environment.

Survey respondents emphasized a consultative approach to development. While they had strong opinions about the direction northern development should take, they qualified this opinion with the need to involve individuals and communities in the development process. In their view, developing Alberta's north will require a long-term commitment to address the diverse interests of individuals, communities, government and industry.

SOME KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges to Human Services

The study revealed that there has been progress in improving human services in the north. Yet community leaders indicated that considerable work is still needed to:

- attract and retain professionals
- improve the quality and quantity of programs and facilities
- address the problems associated with funding.

Challenges in Economic Development

In the past, northern Albertans have demonstrated a commitment to economic development as a means of strengthening communities. For the most part, community leaders are confident their economic development priorities can be achieved. However, they expressed a desire to see development proceed in a manner that:

- is compatible and supportive of northern life-styles
- provides opportunities for young people and the unemployed
- contributes to the diversification of the economy
- maintains the integrity of the natural environment.

Challenges in Environment Management

Survey respondents cited a healthy environment as a key factor that makes living in the north enjoyable. While they generally supported continued development of the region's resources, they were concerned about the need to:

- preserve the northern natural environment
- guide the nature and pace of development from the standpoint of environmental sustainability.

NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES CONFERENCE

The Northern Perspectives Conference, held November 21-23 in Grande Prairie, was the fourth in a series of major review conferences sponsored by the NADC. Previous conferences were held in 1975, 1980 and 1985. The goal of the 1990 conference was to help the NADC prepare a set of principles and recommendations capable of balancing environmental, economic and social development objectives.

Over 300 delegates from across northern Alberta attended the conference. Through a series of presentations, panel discussions, workshops and focus groups, delegates discussed development issues in two broad areas:

- Environment & Economy
- People & Community.

SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

Speakers and panelists who participated in the conference included:

- Hon. Dick Johnston, provincial treasurer
- Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair, minister responsible for northern development
- Hon. Peter Elzinga, minister of Economic Development & Trade
- Bob Elliott, MLA, chairman, Northern Alberta Development Council
- Mike Cardinal, MLA
- Gerry DeSorcy, chairman, Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board
- Ken McCready, chairman, Alberta Round Table on Economy and Environment
- Lloyd McGinnis, chairman, Canadian International Institute of Sustainable Development
- Larry Olhauser, registrar, Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons
- Bernie Campbell, deputy minister, Alberta Tourism
- Ken Higginbotham, assistant deputy minister, Alberta Forestry, Lands & Wildlife
- Ian Doig, editor, *Doig's Digest*

COMMON THEMES

Several common themes about development in Alberta's north emerged at the conference. Delegates expressed a need for:

- greater sensitivity to the unique needs and concerns of northern Albertans and the diversity of communities within the region
- recognition of the importance of environmental protection and enhancement in guiding development decisions
- full consultation with communities on future development in the region
- improved cooperation and coordination among agencies that provide services to people and communities
- special attention to the development disparities that exist in the region
- improvements in northern infrastructure to promote economic development and improve the quality-of-life of northerners
- economic diversification as a means of stabilizing the economic base of northern communities.

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

The second day of the conference featured separate workshops on 10 areas related to northern development. The workshops provided delegates with an opportunity to hear from prominent individuals on key development issues. Following the presentations, delegates participated in small group discussions where they were able to provide their perspectives on the development priorities for the region. Some of their recommendations are listed below.

Oil & Gas

- Increase proactive company/community consultation on potential oil and gas development.
- Maintain and enhance environmental thrusts implemented by the oil and gas sectors.
- Increase oil and gas processing within the region.
- Initiate more smaller scale energy projects in the north.

Agriculture

- Review agriculture-related legislation to enhance the image of agriculture and the quality-of-life of producers.
- Education programs to inform both consumers and producers on agricultural issues and programs should be improved.
- Increased government assistance should be provided in "market neutral" programs such as fuel and fertilizer tax reductions and there should be preferred interest rates on farm land rollover.

Forestry

- Provide a consensus and common vision for development through public dialogue.
- Create a climate that promotes value-added processing and encourages small business development.
- Increase attention to developing and marketing our forestry expertise.

Commercial Fishing and Trapping

- Improve information on the northern fishery to allow for effective fish management.
- Revise the fishing licensing system to better balance supply and demand.
- Integrate wildlife management with resource development.
- Improve management of road access to limit impacts on fish and wildlife resources.

Tourism and Recreation

- Increase efforts to educate communities regarding the importance of tourism and its resulting economic benefits.
- Increase cooperation among government, industry and communities in marketing and developing tourism.

Education and Training

- Increase emphasis on academic excellence.
- Restructure resources to provide equity in funding and equal access at the local level.

Health Care

- Increase focus on preventive health care.
- Integrate all aspects of health care at the local level.
- Ensure adequate numbers of health professionals.

Social and Community Services

- Address poverty and related issues through creation of long-term employment.
- Increase accountability through public participation, communication and cooperation.

Native Communities

- Develop cultural awareness programs that promote involvement and inter-community communication.
- Show greater sensitivity to the "lead time" necessary for native communities to plan and implement new economic and governance arrangements.
- Involve native youth in the planning process.

Small Communities

- Demonstrate improved understanding of communities' strengths, assets, limitations and vision when planning for the future.
- Provide opportunities for leaders and elected officials to keep abreast of trends, changes and opportunities to help communities realize their potential.
- Set objectives to promote and market the strong points of each community.

NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES VIDEO

The NADC produced a slide tape presentation as part of the opening of the Northern Perspectives Conference. After the conference, the slide tape was converted into video format so it could be made available to the northern public.

The video deals with the three main themes of the Northern Perspectives Conference: economic development and the environment, the modernization of northern Alberta, and the people and communities of northern Alberta. These three themes are related to the oil and gas industry, forestry development, growth of the agriculture sector, and tourism initiatives.

The concluding section returns to a montage style with shots of oil sands development, forest industry, farming, young people, and northerners in various settings. Closing comments on the future of northern Alberta, its vast resources, its development potential and the goal of sound environmental management are the thoughts and images that are left with viewers and which challenge them to continued commitment to the north.

NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES STUDENT POSTER CONTEST

In conjunction with the Northern Perspectives Conference, the NADC held a poster contest for northern students in Grades 6-9. The contest drew entries from the region, with each poster depicting the young person's view of his or her own community. First, second and third prizes were awarded for each of the four grades. Prize moneys were donated by several northern newspapers, radio stations and the NADC.

A total of 396 entries were received. Winning posters were from students in Fort McMurray, Grimshaw, Girouxville, Slave Lake, Cadotte Lake, and Rocky Lane. Winning posters and honorable mentions were displayed throughout the conference.

STUDENT BURSARY PROGRAM

Created in 1974, the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program is designed to facilitate the training of a technical and professional workforce. Such a workforce is in demand in northern areas of the province.

Students assisted through the program are obligated to work in northern Alberta, preferably in rural locations, for at least one year for each year of bursary support received.

The Bursary Program is administered by the Students Finance Board. A selection committee made up of four members of the Northern Alberta Development Council and one representative each from the Metis Association of Alberta, the Students Finance Board, and Alberta Career Development and Employment, is responsible for establishing guidelines and selecting candidates.

Using the selection criteria, assistance was offered to 131 applicants for total funding of $560,000. Since the 1974 inception of the program, 2,283 bursaries have been awarded. These bursaries attracted professional graduates into the health care system, education, social services, agriculture, law, business, and engineering. Most bursary graduates have returned to the north, and at least 50% have remained there after completing their service obligation.

Through a joint initiative of Career Development and Employment and the Northern Development Branch, the Professional Manpower Recruitment Project has helped bursary graduates contact northern employers.

Based on a recommendation from Council, a review of the Bursary Program was undertaken in November, 1990. The project made extensive contact with former and current recipients to evaluate the program, update employment status, and receive other information. The Professional Manpower Recruitment Project will use the Northern Alberta Student Bursary Feasibility Study to develop alternate strategies to attract and retain professionals in northern Alberta.

MEDICAL ELECTIVE PROJECT

In September of 1984, the Northern Alberta Development Council initiated a Medical Elective Project as a follow-up to the Council's very successful Medical Recruitment Interchanges. The interchanges brought northern community representatives together with medical students from the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

The Medical Elective Project provides small grants to students to defray their travel and accommodation costs while taking course electives in northern Alberta. The intent is to encourage medical doctors to locate in northern Alberta upon graduation by giving them a sample of life in the north.

In 1988, the project was expanded to include professionals from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine under the title of the Medical Professional Exposure Project.

Since the project began, 110 medical students, eight occupational therapists and 32 physiotherapists have been given the opportunity to experience rural practice as part of their undergraduate training. The project has been funded for a total cost of $117,410. Sixteen northern communities have been involved.

Northern Development Branch

The purpose of the Northern Development Branch is to share in developing and maintaining the kind of socio-economic environment that will give maximum opportunity to northern Albertans to grow and prosper.

To achieve its purpose, the Branch provides all the administrative and technical support required by the Northern Alberta Development Council. The Branch also works toward achieving specific socio-economic improvements in the area.

The Branch seeks to advance the development of human and natural resources in northern Alberta, as well as to aid in community development goals such as local decision-making and planning. It delves into a wide variety of issues as a result of briefs received by the Northern Alberta Development Council, e.g., agriculture, resource development, business development, tourism, manpower training, community and regional infrastructure, education, social services, recreation, communications and transportation.

The **Research and Coordination Section** of the Branch provides research on community and regional needs in the north, program evaluations and analysis, and policy development as requested by the Northern Alberta Development Council. It also monitors and coordinates program delivery and special enrichment projects for the north.

Although not directly involved in Council activities, the **Agreement Administration Section** provides information to the members as required. The purpose of this section is to implement the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement over the 1986-92 time period. This involves assessing applications and undertaking the necessary financial disbursement and control procedures.

The **Council Administration Section** provides technical and logistical support to the chairman and to individual Council members for the monthly meetings. It also offers special project support for Council and Branch initiatives.

In support of Council's public participation role, section staff visits community leaders prior to public meetings to prepare advance briefing material for Council members. Contact is made with town councils, chambers of commerce and other interested community members to discuss concerns related to the development of business, industry and government services in their region. Staff members are available at any time to answer questions from the public about the brief presentation process. Usually six public Council meetings are held in different communities across northern Alberta each year.

Section staff is responsible for the preliminary investigation of issues presented either at public meetings or directly to the chairman between meetings.

In its role as a coordinator and facilitator and, particularly, as supplier of technical support to the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Branch maintains a vital communications link between northern people and government.

The Council Administration Section is also responsible for the administration of the Professional Recruitment Project. This project is jointly supported by the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement, and Alberta Career Development and Employment. The project's objective is to develop, over its three-year term, some viable strategies for the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce in northern Alberta. One strategy will be to examine the potential of a private non-profit foundation for government and industry to provide incentives so students might attend post-secondary institutions. An important part of this plan will be to encourage such students to return to northern Alberta to work and live.